

Virus' fallout grows more dire

STOCKS SUFFER WORST DAY SINCE '87

Dow loses 10% amid virus fear despite reassurances from the Fed and Trump.

By GEOFFREY MOHAN AND DON LEE

Financial markets exercised their own form of social distancing Thursday as they ignored friendly intervention and plunged deeply into bear territory amid coronavirus fears, notching their worst day of trading since the 1987 crash.

Neither an automatic timeout in trading, nor a \$1.5-trillion Federal Reserve pledge to sop up the bond market, nor a series of clarifications and reassurances from the Trump administration could stem a selling contagion.

The market listened, then spun on its heels and sold. The Dow Jones industrial average fell 2,352 points, down about 10%, with the S&P 500 and Nasdaq trimming 9.5% and 9.4%, respectively.

The pain was widespread. Travel plummeted over government restrictions and concerns about containment of the virus. Energy was particularly hard hit as an oil price war coupled with an anticipated fall in demand weighed on investors. Technology firms faltered, with Amazon dropping nearly 8% and Apple falling 9.9% over questions about its supply chain and sales in China. The consumer durables sector notched one of the market's few gains, up more than 6%, as buyers hoarded supplies.

Investors were not convinced by President Trump's Wednesday night speech, nor his Thursday reassurance that the markets would bounce back "very big at the right time." Within hours, they sent a message back that Thursday was not that time.

Some took the coronavirus panic as validation of an ongoing hunch that the market was overvalued, said René Nourse, a CNBC commentator and founder of Urban Wealth Management, an El Segundo financial advisory firm. "When the coronavirus happened, it kicked the door down."

With the market in chaos, talk in Washington turned to remedies. Few of them promise help in the short term.

Trump reiterated his [See Markets, A8]



ALLEN J. SCHABEN Los Angeles Times

DISNEYLAND, where rainy weather kept crowds sparse Thursday, will close along with Disney California Adventure from Saturday through the end of the month in response to the coronavirus pandemic.

Parties close to agreement on coronavirus assistance

House Democrats and White House in talks for stimulus bill to aid workers, businesses.

By JENNIFER HABERKORN AND SARAH D. WIRE

WASHINGTON — After a day of negotiations and partisan brinkmanship, House Democrats and Trump administration officials were close to reaching agreement Thursday evening on an economic stimulus package to address the widening impact of the coronavirus on American workers and businesses.

The deal — being forged by House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-San Francisco) and Treasury Secretary Steven T. Mnuchin via frequent phone calls — is expected to eliminate insurance co-payments for COVID-19 testing and provide billions of dollars in aid to state and local governments for food programs and unemployment benefits. It is also likely to include assistance for workers dealing with coronavirus who don't receive sick pay from their employers.

"It's fair to say we're close to an agreement, subject to the exchange of paper," Pelosi told reporters Thursday [See Stimulus, A8]



SUSAN WALSH Associated Press

HOUSE SPEAKER Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell avoid a handshake Thursday at a lunch with Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar.

MORE COVERAGE

Closure debate at LAUSD

District officials and the teachers union are at odds over keeping campuses open. **CALIFORNIA, B1**

Hollywood takes a hit

Studios delay release of potential blockbusters, and TV networks cancel upfront presentations. **BUSINESS, C1**

A void in the sports world

The NCAA tournament is canceled, and major pro leagues halt play. At least for now, it's lights out. **SPORTS, D1**

Nightlife braces for effects

Concerts and clubs were still mostly in full swing this week, but that was likely a last gasp before a hiatus. **CALENDAR, E1**

■■■ ELECTION 2020 ■■■

Biden looks past primaries, slams Trump

The Democrat paints the president as an ineffective leader fumbling virus crisis.

By JANET HOOK

WASHINGTON — Joe Biden on Thursday delivered the opening salvo in the general election campaign against President Trump in a speech that centered on the coronavirus crisis, but, more broadly, posed the question Democrats hope to make the centerpiece of their campaign: What kind of leader does America want?

With the primary compe-

tion against Sen. Bernie Sanders now largely behind him, the former vice president appeared in his hometown of Wilmington, Del., posed in front of five American flags, and focused on his general election rival, Trump.

"This virus laid bare the severe shortcomings of the current administration," Biden said. "Public fears are being compounded by pervasive lack of trust in this president fueled by adversarial relationships with the truth."

"Our government's ability to respond effectively has been undermined by the hollowing out of our agencies and disparagement of science."

Later in the day, Sanders also gave a speech on the public health crisis that has overtaken the campaign, and he linked it to his signature issue: the need for a strong government role in providing healthcare to all who need it. Speaking from his hometown of Burlington, Vt., he argued that America's ability to respond to the crisis has been hampered by the "incompetence and recklessness" of the Trump administration and by the absence of universal healthcare.

"If there ever was a time in the modern history of the country when we are all in this together, this is that moment," Sanders said.

[See Biden, A12]



DREW ANGERER Getty Images

"THIS VIRUS laid bare the severe shortcomings of the current administration," Joe Biden said.

Events called off and parks to close

As Newsom moves to limit mass gatherings, public life slows to a near halt across state.

By JAMES RAINEY, HAILEY BRANSON-POTTS AND ANITA CHABRIA

Public life across the state of California ground into a slower and more ominous gear Thursday as attempts to slow the spread of the coronavirus shut down community gatherings, sports events and government meetings and forced the planned closure of Disneyland for just the fourth time in its 64-year history.

A day after calling for the cancellation of all gatherings of more than 250 people, California Gov. Gavin Newsom issued a sweeping executive order allowing the state, if necessary, to take over hotels and medical facilities to treat a potential tide of coronavirus patients.

The unprecedented actions mirrored a hunkering down across the U.S., as the National Collegiate Athletic Assn. canceled its men's and women's basketball tournaments, all theaters on Broadway went dark, the U.S. Supreme Court said it would no longer welcome visitors and Major League Baseball called off spring training games and said the start of the season would be delayed at least two weeks.

"This is where we need to go next," Newsom told reporters Thursday, adding that the shutdowns are aimed at slowing the virus' spread and to "get through [See California, A9]

State's pace of testing still lags

Without needed chemicals, officials will continue to undercount cases.

By SOUMYA KARLAMANGLA AND EMILY BAUMGAERTNER

Testing for the novel coronavirus continues to face severe limitations, as California health officials lack key components to conduct laboratory analysis, marking another barrier in the state's efforts to identify infectious patients.

The shortfall compounds a month of sluggish progress in deploying diagnostic tests developed by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and, if not quickly remedied, could mean continued undercounting of infected patients and hinder efforts to contain the outbreak.

"This is imperative that the federal government and [See Testing, A12]